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ABSTRACT

The Community Service Scholars Program at Trinity College (Vermont) was established in fall 1989 to give single parents on welfare an opportunity to earn a four-year degree while volunteering at least 6 hours per week in community service projects. The participants receive financial support to cover most educational expenses. In the first year, 12 full-time, female students started the program by attending a week-long, August residential orientation program on campus. The students, whose average age was 32, found the orientation helpful in bridging the gap into the world of academia and adjusting to attending college with traditional 18- to 22-year-old college students. The orientation also helped them form the basis for an ongoing support group. Of the 12 students who started in 1989, eight remained in the program and five of these had a grade point average of over 3.0. To date, 18 students have graduated; 12 of these are employed full time; two are attending graduate school; and four recent graduates, are seeking employment. Before the grant terminated, the college assumed all program costs and also successfully increased private contributions. Appendices include a program application form, a letter of recommendation form, and brief profiles of student participants. (SW)

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TRINITY COLLEGE OF VERMONT

Community Service Learning Program

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COMMUNITY SERVICE SCHOLARS PROGRAM
FINAL REPORT
A. ACTIVITIES & RESULTS

Trinity College's Community Service Scholars Program began in the Summer of 1989 with the acceptance of 12 welfare eligible single parents into the program for classes starting in the Fall of 1989. In August these twelve women (average age 32) attended a week long residential orientation program on the Trinity campus.

Subsequent evaluation of the first semester indicated the women found the orientation program (especially the residential component of it) to be extraordinarily helpful to them. It helped bridge the gap into the world of academia, made them feel more comfortable with the traditional 18-22 year old "traditional" college students they would be in class with, bonded the 12 Scholars together, and formed the basis for an ongoing support group. One component of the orientation was a Ropes Course, which was very helpful in bringing the Scholars closer emotionally and teaching them to trust and rely on one another. Attached is a full schedule of events for the orientation week.

Also during the first year the College initiated fundraising efforts aimed at enabling the College to continue the program beyond the grant period. A Community Service Scholars Sponsors Program was initiated and produced three sponsors whose contributions helped defray the uncovered cost of the tuition plan for these students (each sponsor covers the excess costs for one Scholar).

Two of the 12 Scholars terminated from the program for academic reasons in the 1st semester, one voluntarily withdrew from the program but remained in the College, and one took a leave of absence because of severe long-distance travel problems. The 8 remaining achieved extraordinary success. Their Grade Point Averages were all over the program requirement and 5 of the Scholars recorded Averages over 3.0 (3.1, 3.4, 3.4, 3.5, and 3.8).

In academic years 1991-1992 (the second, and final, year of the F.I.P.S.E. grant) through 1993-1994 the program enrollment was increased steadily by the college to 22 students, almost a doubling of the program size.

Subsequent to the termination of the grant, the college assumed all program costs and was successful in increasing private contributions substantially (to approximately $20,000 per year). The college also successfully applied to the State of Vermont for a contract grant to base a 3/5ths time Reach Up case manager on campus. The Reach Up program is a Vermont State program designed to help recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children obtain

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sufficient education to move off public assistance and into the workforce.

The Scholars program has maintained a retention rate of over 90%, and its graduates have been very successful in entering the workforce. Twelve of eighteen graduates (66%) are employed full time, two (11%) are in graduate school, and four (22%) are seeking employment. Those seeking employment are all recent graduates (May, 1994).

Contrary to what one might have expected, the Scholars have unanimously expressed strong support for and very positive reaction to the community service requirement in the program. The requirement underwent only one significant change from the start of the grant: in the 1992-1993 academic year the weekly service requirement was reduced from 8 hours to 6 hours. This was not done because of complaints by the Scholars nor an inability to perform at the 8 hour level, but rather as a result of investigation to determine what was the ideal number of hours per week to perform service. Based on academic loads, community needs, and the Scholars' families' needs, it was determined that 6 hours per week was the most appropriate number of hours.

The program has received solid assistance from the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation, the Department of Social Welfare, and REACH-UP.

The program has also enjoyed substantial media coverage and was highlighted at the Single Parent Higher Education Conference at Goddard College. In June of 1990 it was also discussed at the Single Parent Higher Education Conference in Lexington, Kentucky (at which Trinity researcher Dr. Barbara Cheng presented a paper about the program).

Subsequent to the third annual Single Parent Higher Education conference, at the University of Kentucky, Trinity College of Vermont's Community Service Scholars Program became host to the Single Parent Education Consortium. It now publishes a national newsletter and serves as a national clearinghouse for program information.

The Scholars have performed thousands of hours of community service each school year in a variety of community organizations:

Emergency shelters, a tenants' association (low income), the Food Shelf, Chittenden Community Action, the Baird Children Center, the Medical Center Hospital, a respite care facility, local schools, nursing homes, arts councils, scout troops, the Vermont Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired, a non-profit credit union, the Vermont Children's Forum, etc.

The program was also featured in the New York Times and in a videotape production which was shown in Gynecologists' offices nationwide (copy of tape enclosed).

B. PROBLEMS FACED & HOW RESOLVED

Other than the normal problems of adjusting to college life and the scheduling

difficulties of balancing school, work (community service) and families, the program participants have not experienced significant problems. As noted above, some students exit the program but the retention rate in the program is considerably above the general student retention rate on campus.

Monthly meetings are held to help keep the Scholars bonded and give them a forum for discussing and resolving problems.

The Scholars also see each other regularly (almost daily) because of the smallness of the campus and they say this frequent contact has been very helpful.

C. STATUS OF EVALUATION PLAN & PLAN FOR DISSEMINATION

Trinity College's Community Service Scholars Program continues to undergo extensive evaluation by Dr. Barbara Cheng of the Basic and Applied Social Sciences staff, and will hopefully be part of a 6 to 10 year longitudinal study of the effects of such educational programs.

The Cheng research, which was featured at the University of Kentucky's Second Annual National Conference on Single Parent Education, speaks to the importance of listening to disadvantaged groups directly. It addresses questions such as:

-What are the motivational profiles of these students?
-What barriers have they overcome?
-What strengths have sustained them?
-What specific needs do they present with educationally?
-What is the value of the community service component?

D. FINANCIAL STATUS

All program funds were expended in accordance with the approved budgets and line items.

E. CHANGES TO THE PROGRAM SINCE 1991

ORIENTATION:

Incoming Scholars still participate in an intensive, residential Orientation, but they are also joined in many parts of the Orientation by "veteran" Scholars. This revitalizes the "veteran" Scholars and more easily brings the new ones into the group. Also, at least one "veteran" Scholar accompanies the new Scholars throughout the entire Orientation, serving as a mentor and resident assistant.

RECOGNITION:

The Scholars are recognized for their academic achievements at Honors Convocation and for their community service achievements at the Community Service Volunteer Recognition Dinner.

RECRUITMENT:

Some Scholars visit community sites to discuss the program and recruit future participants. Various college offices work together in the recruitment effort, including the Reach Up office, admissions, academic advising, and the Community Service Learning Program.

DEVELOPMENT:

Fundraising has been fairly successful, with several area individuals and businesses volunteering to sponsor a Scholar for one or more years. Regional charitable foundations have also given generously to the program.

REPLICATION:

Many colleges have inquired about the program and applauded its model for combining service with welfare reform and financial assistance to students. Burlington College has replicated the program. Additionally, the state of Vermont has replicated our program's service requirement in a statewide welfare reform plan which went into effect July 1.

BENEFITS:

The community and the students in the program have benefitted greatly. Students have developed career and job skills necessary for professional success, a positive attitude towards civic and social responsibility, and a continued commitment to community service beyond completion of the program. The community has benefitted from a skilled, mature pool of volunteers, an opportunity to train tomorrow's employees, and an opportunity to assist in developing models for peer advocacy and self-help. Benefits have also accrued to the children of the program participants. We have heard many stories about these children asking their mothers <u>where</u> the children will go to college someday, not <u>if</u>.

TRINITY COLLEGE
OF VERMONT

Community Service Learning Program

COMMUNITY SERVICE SCHOLARS PROGRAM

DESCRIPTION: The Community Service Scholars Program at Trinity College of Vermont was established in the Fall of 1989 to give single parents on welfare an opportunity to earn a four-year degree while volunteering at least six hours per week in community service projects. It was the first program in the country to pair college work with community service and in so doing, dramatically improve Scholars' self-image. The program began with 12 Scholars and now enrolls twenty-two Scholars each year. The target is for 36 Scholars to be enrolled annually.

The objectives include providing means for single parents, primarily women, to:

- develop real skills necessary for employment adequate to provide self-sufficiency
- develop critical thinking and reasoning skills for full participation in civic and social life
- develop high self-esteem and leadership skills
- demonstrate commitment to community service
- demonstrate self- and peer-advocacy
- complete requirements for a Bachelor of Arts degree in a chosen field

SUPPORT: Scholars receive a scholarship each year to cover educational expenses and have access to on-campus day care. Academic and personal support is provided by the Program Director, the Coordinator of Academic Advising, a campus-based social welfare case manager and by other scholars in the program in similar situations. Scholars participate in an intensive residential orientation program as well as in regular support group meetings.

FUNDING: Trinity College of Vermont supports the Community Service Scholars with the help of businesses, individuals, foundations and public grants. The college is now seeking an endowment for this program.

SELECTION: Candidates must be single parents who meet the academic standards for admission and demonstrate financial need. In particular, the program seeks parents with leadership potential, drive to take charge of their lives, and a commitment to community and public service.

CONSORTIUM: In 1990, Trinity's Director of Community Service Learning, Bruce Spector, organized the national Single Parent Education Consortium to bring together college program organizers to share resources, research and information.

OUTCOME: Over one-half of the Scholars maintain Dean's List status (G.P.A. of 3.5 or better) and the program's retention rate exceeds 90%. To date there have been 14 graduates from this Program who are successfully breaking the vicious cycle of poverty. They are pursuing professional careers in a wide range of positions and attending graduate school. One woman is a credit analyst at a local credit union; another works in biotechnology; another is an advocate for children's issues; another is pursuing her Doctorate in Economics. The additional value gained by having these women serve as role models for their families and others is one of the incalculable results of the Program.

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TRINITY COLLEGE
OF VERMONT

Office of Admissions

Trinity College Community Service Scholars
Academic Year 1994-95

Description: Trinity College of Vermont's Community Service Scholars Program assists low-income, single parents in attending Trinity College on a full-time, degree-seeking, non-residential basis. The program provides grants to welfare-eligible, single parents. Students participate in structured community work experiences of six hours/week. Participants must satisfy Vermont residency requirements as defined by the VSAC grant program.

Amount of Award: $2,000.

Guidelines: Applicants to the Scholars program must meet the following criteria:

- o acceptance to Trinity College
- o welfare eligibility
- o single parent, head of household (child/children must reside with applicant)

Applicants meeting these criteria will be encouraged to apply for assistance through the Scholars program, based on demonstrated potential for academic success and ability to perform community service experience.

Application Procedure: Upon acceptance to the College through general admissions, prospective applicants will be invited to complete written application for the Scholars program. Reference letters will be required. Final applicants will be interviewed for selection into the program.

Application Deadlines: Applications will be available from Trinity College Admissions. Materials must be completed and returned by April 15, 1994. See below for pre-orientation dates.

Orientation to Program: Accepted Scholars will be required to attend a residential orientation and training program on the Trinity College campus from August 7 through 10. Lodging will be provided.

Information: For further information about the Scholars program or the orientation week, please call:

Bruce Spector	Julie Trottier	Carol Hamlin
Community Service	Reach-up Case Manager	Admissions
Mercy Hall	Mann Hall	Mann Hall
Trinity College	Trinity College	Trinity College
658-0337 X331	658-0337 X230	658-0337 X218

December, 1993

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Trinity College Community Service Scholars Program

Selection

The award is targeted to those welfare-eligible, single, custodial parents in a full-time, degree-seeking program who have demonstrated a commitment to service, leadership potential and good scholastic ability.

Eligibility

- Demonstrated scholastic ability
- Demonstrated interest in and commitment to public service
- Leadership potential

Application (Parts I through IV must be completed by April 15, 1994.)

Part I - Application to and acceptance into a degree-seeking program at Trinity College.

Part II - Submission of completed financial aid application packet to Financial Aid Office, Trinity College.

Part III - Written application for scholarship.

Part IV - Letters of recommendation, including one from your caseworker and two others from such sources as previous employers, academic advisors, instructors and volunteer supervisors.

Part V - An interview will be required of all finalists.

Renewal

If program funding continues to be available, the award may be renewed based on:

1. Maintenance of an annual academic average of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale.
2. Successful completion of community work during the academic year (6 hours weekly).
3. Continued demonstration of financial need.
4. Compliance with Program Guidelines.
5. Completion of Application for Renewal form.

Deadlines: This form must be completed by the candidate and submitted to: Community Service Scholars Program, Trinity College Admissions, 208 Colchester Avenue, Burlington, VT 05401 by April 15, 1994.

TRINITY COLLEGE COMMUNITY SERVICE SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Application Form

This form must be completed by the candidate for the Trinity Community Service Scholars Program and submitted to: Community Service Scholars Program, Trinity College Admissions, 208 Colchester Avenue, Burlington, VT 05401, by April 15, 1994. Feel free to use additional pages if necessary.

Name:_____
Address:_____
_____
Phone: (Home)_____(Work)_____

1. Elaborate on why you feel commitment to public service is important. Describe a past or present activity in which you have demonstrated this commitment.

2. Highlight some of your past experiences that demonstrate your ability to organize or take charge of a group or activity.

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LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION
Trinity College Community Service Scholars Program

Applicant's Name_____

The Trinity College Community Service Scholars Program awards scholarships to welfare-eligible, single, custodial parents based on a commitment to service, leadership potential and good scholastic ability.
Please comment on the following areas:

Commitment to Service_____

_____

Leadership Potential_____

_____

Problem-solving Abilities_____

_____

Vision for the Future_____

_____

Interpersonal Skills_____

_____

Academic Potential_____

_____

Additional Comments (Feel free to continue on the reverse if necessary):__

_____

Signature:_____ Date:_____

Name:_____ Address:_____

Organization:_____ Title:_____

Phone Number:_____

How long have you known the applicant?_____

In what capacity?_____

Please return this recommendation to: Community Service Scholars Program, Trinity College Admissions, Burlington, VT 05401, by April 8, 1994.

TRINITY COLLEGE
OF VERMONT

Community Service Learning Program

COMMUNITY SERVICE SCHOLARS
Admittees to the Program, 1990 - 1993

All of the Trinity College Community Service Scholars are low-income single parents attending college full time while caring for their families and performing at least 6 hours of community service per week. Since the program began in the Fall of 1989, over half of the Scholars have achieved academic honors.

Paula is a 36 year old mother of four boys ages 16, 15, 7 and 8, and one infant girl. She has volunteered at the Chittenden Community Correctional Center and the Salvation Army. Careers in Mediation, Dispute Resolution and family services (specifically, working with pregnant women) interest Paula and she is majoring in Social Work. Paula is a graduate of Rice Memorial High School in South Burlington, Vermont. She is highly motivated and hopes to lead her children to a better life through the education she obtains and the example she sets. Paula believes "there is a better way of life out there if you want it badly enough and are truly willing to work for it." Paula's academic performance at Trinity is excellent.

Allison has a 9 year old daughter and is 29 years old. She began her education at Trinity College in the Fall of 1989 and proved to be an excellent student. Her major was Business Administration and she has been very active in Community Service projects over the past few years. Allison is a Burlington native and graduated from High School in Essex Junction. She would like to develop a program to teach welfare recipients better money management techniques. Allison graduated in 1993 and is working for the Vermont Department of Corrections.

Kathleen C. received her Associates Degree from Champlain College and pursued a Bachelor's degree in Education at Trinity. She has two children, a boy and a girl ages 12 and 11 respectively, and is 34 years old. Her volunteer experience includes working as a soccer coach and helping mentally handicapped teens. Kathleen is a Burlington native and graduate of Rice Memorial High School. She hopes to assist in the development of expanded child care services in the public schools for low income families. Kathleen voluntarily exited the program and the college in 1992, before completion of her program.

Anne - Marie is 37 years old and the mother of 2 boys, ages 14 and 16. A lifetime resident of Vermont, she received her High School degree from the Essex Junction Educational Center. She has distinguished herself as a leader in the effort by Northgate residents to save their housing community from being converted from low income housing to condominiums. Anne -

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Marie has an associate degree in building technology and graduated from the Scholars program in 1992 with a Bachelors Degree in Business Administration. She is employed full time at the Vermont Development Credit Union and hopes to own her own business some day.

Michelle graduated in 1992 and is pursuing a Doctorate in Economics at the University of Colorado. She plans on a career using her Economics knowledge to help lower and working class people. She is a busy 34 year old mother of two young girls and has volunteered as a Board Member of a Child Care Cooperative, a client advocate at Women Helping Battered Women, and as a clerk at the Vermont Development Credit Union. She sees a significant unmet need in our society for infant day care.

Tishka received her Associate's Degree from Champlain College. She has volunteered at Women Helping Battered Women and assisted at a Food Cooperative. She is interested in Business Management and has her sights set on obtaining a Master's Degree someday. She is 30 years old and has two daughters. Tishka was born in Keene, New Hampshire and graduated High School in Brattleboro, Vermont. She voluntarily exited the program in 1992 but continued her education at Trinity and received her degree in 1993.

Ashe-Maria is 29 and has a nine year old son. She attended Trinity from Fall 1989 to Spring 1993 and excelled academically. She received a degree in Business Administration and Accounting and is employed full time as a bookkeeper and accountant for a manufacturing company in Williston. She has been involved extensively in assisting people in need of food and shelter. A native of Manchester, New Hampshire, she hopes to own her own accounting company someday. She has volunteered at soup kitchens and at the Howard Mental Health agency, and believes strongly in the need for many more "Big Brother - Big Sister" type programs in our communities to help children who are at-risk.

Sandra is 42 and the mother of four children. She lives in Burlington with the two minor children and graduated from the Social Work program. She is employed doing respite care. She has served on the Board of Directors of Vermont Legal Aid and has also been a member of the Women's Rape Crisis Hotline and a Girl Scout Leader. Her career goals include working with male and female victims of sexual assault.

Anna has been involved with many community service projects including the Multiple Sclerosis Walk-a-thon. She exhibited superb academic performance while in the program and is now employed full time in a growing local company. Anna's 27 and has a young daughter. She is a native of Burlington and a graduate of Mount Mansfield Union High School. Anna believes strongly in improving our public education system. She wants to set a good example her daughter and other young people can follow.

Helene is a 44 year old mother of one boy. She has lived in Burlington nearly all her life, earning her diploma from Burlington High School. She developed a special interest in working with hearing impaired children and enrolled in the Special Education program at Trinity (minoring in Psychology). She then changed her major to psychology and graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in 1993. She volunteers as an interpreter for the hearing impaired. Helene views her education as a means primarily of helping others of greater need. She is now

preparing for graduate school admission.

Kathleen S. intends to be a teacher. She has four children (23, 22, 8, and 6) and is 45 years old. Kathleen's 22 year old daughter also attends school at Trinity. Kathleen has volunteered for the Girl Scouts for many years, would like to establish a support group in the Grand Isle area for mothers of pre-schoolers, and volunteers currently for the Futures Program sponsored by Women Helping Battered Women. She is a native of Maine.

Elaine, 32 years old, is the mother of two young children. She received her diploma from Bellows Free Academy in St. Albans, Vermont. Her primary interest is in working with young children. She has worked as a volunteer in many pre-school and elementary school settings and has completed a 200 hour course of study to become certified as a nurse assistant (to assist in a Hospice Program). She and her children have also volunteered as respite care givers for the Vermont State Poster Child for the March of Dimes. She completed a significant research project on Single Parent programs at American colleges, and interned at the Vermont Children's Forum. She graduated in 1993 and is now employed full time at the Vermont Children's Forum.

Laura is 22 and has one young daughter. She has worked as a teen panelist for the past several years discussing issues related to teen pregnancy with young women. Laura wants to obtain a degree in education and become a high school English teacher. She was born in Bellows Falls, Vermont, and volunteers at the Peace and Justice Center in Burlington. She remarried and exited the program in 1992 but remains at Trinty completing her degree requirements.

Nancy is 38 and the mother of a 15 year old girl. She graduated from Mount Mansfield Union High School and graduated from the Scholars program in 1993 with a degree in Art. Nancy has volunteered for 4-H and the Fanny Allen Hospital. She is very interested in working with area and state environmental organizations to study and remedy damage to Vermont river eco-systems. Upon graduation, Nancy moved to Portland, Maine.

Denise (35) has two young children and has worked the past couple of years with children at the Edmunds school in Burlington. She is majoring in education and minoring in history. Denise has volunteered for many Girl Scout activities and is interested in assisting the Baird Center for Children. Denise was born in Saranac Lake, New York and received her high school diploma there. She is very concerned about youth at risk of delinquency, school failure and substance abuse and she hopes to work on programs to help some of these young people.

1991 ADMISSIONS TO COMMUNITY SERVICE SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Louise is a 31 year old mother of two children. She began her Trinity education in the Spring of 1990 after completing a two year degree at Champlain College. Her major at Trinity was social work and she was a strong member of the program. She voluntarily exited the program in 1992. Her volunteer activities were many and varied: Ethan Allen Daycare, Sara Holbrook Center, Lund Family Center, North Avenue Christian School, Burlington Parks and Recreation, Reach Up, and the Northgate Tenants' Association.

Jean (33) has lived in Hancock, Vermont for the past several years with her three children (12, 13 and 15) and travelled far and wide during that time to complete her A.S. degree from Community College of Vermont and her B.S. degree from Trinity. Jean's very high energy level and her superb management skills served her well as a member of the Hancock School Board and as a college student. She was an exceptional student at Trinity and is employed in the accounting field full time.

Sandra is 26 years old and lives in Colchester with her 7 year old daughter. She came to Trinity with an A.S. degree and received a Bachelor's degree in psychology here in 1993. She has been a social work intern for CVOEO-Community Action Project Self-Sufficiency working directly with clients to help them meet their goals. She sees a great need for high school age youth to be educated in life skills issues such as time management, budgeting, problem solving, stress management, communications, parenting and career development.

1992 ADMISSIONS TO COMMUNITY SERVICE SCHOLARS PROGRAM

CLAIRE lives in Colchester with her two children, a daughter 7 yrs. old and a son 5 yrs. old. She was raised in Vermont and spent several years in the mountain regions of California. Having previously volunteered in her daughter's school, she is now very interested in recycling and other activities aimed at protecting and preserving the environment. Claire has her sights set on a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education.

AMY has a 6 year old daughter. She has volunteered at the Lawrence Barnes Elementary School and is interested in ways to help with literacy education in Burlington's Old North End. A Business Administration major, Amy already had much of her college work completed before entering the Scholars program and obtained her Bachelor's degree in 1993. She is very pleased with the way in which a liberal arts education has opened up her mind and expanded her interests and goals.

JACLYNNE lives in Bristol, Vt. with her two children (ages 9 and 6). She's been active in her community assisting the elementary school and helping with community events. JacLynne's interested in learning more about the Burlington community and its service needs. One reason for JacLynne's attending college is to be a good example for her children and to show them that individuals have the power to choose and mold their future. Having started college last Fall, she finds it has "opened [her] eyes," "broadened [her] awareness" and caused her to rediscover a love of writing.

KERRY and her 9 year old son and 3 year old daughter live in Burlington's North End. She describes herself as "outgoing", "flexible" and a "good friend". Kerry's very interested in ways to help her neighborhood improve its sense of community and its self identity. She hopes to use radio and television communication skills she has acquired to help inform people in the neighborhood about services which could help them and about ways they can work together to improve the community.

TRUDY lives in Burlington with her teenage son. Self-described as "vivacious", "out-going"

and "good in diverse settings", she plans on a degree in Social Work. Trudy's also very interested in women's studies, particularly as they relate to single women. Her community service interests concern hunger and homelessness and ways in which the business community can help solve these problems.

DEBBIE and her 5 year old daughter recently moved to Burlington from Northfield so Debbie could attend Trinity College. She is very concerned about environmental protection and recycling. She has many creative ideas which she hopes to put to good use someday in the business world with a degree in business administration. Debbie successfully completed the two year degree program at Community College of Vermont two years ago and is eager to resume her studies.

1993 ADMISSIONS TO COMMUNITY SERVICE SCHOLARS PROGRAM

MICHELLE lives in Essex Junction with her two children, ages 10 and 14. She was raised in Island Pond, Vermont and has spent several summers there helping children and the elderly as a companion and student teacher. She is very interested in the problems faced by today's youth and wants to help them understand themselves by clarifying the opportunities available to them and helping them reach their goals. She is seeking a degree which will enable her to counsel young people in either an educational or religious setting. She believes there is a very strong need for more programs like the Community Service Scholars Program because many low-income people won't go back to college -- even if generous grants would be available -- because they may feel they don't have anything to give in exchange for the education they would receive. The community service component of our program is a major plus according to Michelle.

CARLENE is making a major move to come to Trinity this Fall, clear across the state from her home in White River Junction. She'll be leaving a very supportive extended family behind, but is eager to join the strong support system that the Scholars program has created on campus. She has just finished a long but very successful educational journey, receiving her Associates of Arts degree from Community College of Vermont, where she served with distinction on the Student Advisory Board. Her four year old daughter Jessica is Carlene's main inspiration to continue her education. Carlene is drawn to Trinity by both the Community Service Scholars Program and also our Biology program. She is pursuing a career in cytotechnology. Her leisure activities include taking walks and learning to play the piano.

JAMIE lives in Colchester, Vt. with her two boys (ages 3 and 4). She received an A.A. from Champlain College and has been at Trinity for one year (Dean's list both semesters) pursuing a degree in accounting. Jamie has a very supportive family living nearby and praises the support she receives from the Trinity community. She says she "never in a million years" expected to have to accept A.N.F.C. (Aid to Needy Families and Children) but had to do it for her children after her divorce. She wishes more people would understand the situations mothers and children face. She looks forward to volunteering with children or elders.

KAREN and her 4 year old daughter Christy live in Burlington. She describes herself as being

very invested in women's issues and the proof is in her community service: Karen has been a tireless volunteer at the Women's Rape Crisis Center, Women Helping Battered Women, and the women's section of the regional correctional center. She has travelled a remarkable journey from being an abuse victim to using her innate positive and supportive attitude to help others. She will pursue a social services degree at Trinity and is interested in making progress for women through improved legislation. Karen has great patience, and finds that through helping others she helps herself.

AMY lives in Winooski with her three sons of whom she says she must sometimes "take charge." She is very concerned about the things children learn from their environment and she wants to work with youth to help them learn tolerance of others. Amy notes that everyone needs to know that they are doing something positive and productive with their lives. Amy was an only child and craves the support which will come with being a member of the Scholars program. Her youngest son thinks it's just great that his mom's in college.

ANGELA and her 3 year old son live in St. Albans, Vt. He keeps her motivated to complete her plans to become a C.P.A. and have her own business. She believes there is a need for more businesses within the community to provide on-site child care. She is also very supportive of programs to combat domestic abuse and rape. She describes herself as independent, well organized, and being very shy at first but very interested in making new friends.

DARLENE and her two daughters (ages 8 and 9) live in South Burlington. She has been at Trinity for 2 years and has been very active in community service as a parent advocate at the Baird Center for Families, as a mentor in the Enhance program at Trinity, and as an all around volunteer in her daughters' softball leagues and Brownie troops. Her vision of the future includes becoming a teacher and helping children avoid substance abuse. Darlene volunteers in order to make a positive difference in her community and also because she wants to contribute something in exchange for the financial assistance she and her daughters receive.

JENNIFER and her four year old daughter Laura live in Burlington. She recently graduated from Champlain College and will pursue a degree in sociology/criminal justice at Trinity. She has volunteered at environmental cleanup projects and was often the #1 participant in charity fundraising projects. Jennifer is interested in using her knowledge of the opportunities available to low-income single parents to help them achieve their goals. Eventually she hopes to work with juveniles involved in the court system.

TRACY has a 15 month old daughter and lives in Waterbury. She's outgoing, athletic, hard working and is looking forward to the challenge presented by the Scholars program. The decision to accept A.N.F.C. was a very difficult one for Tracy, but she did it for her daughter. That too is what drives her to obtain a degree in accounting. She expects to get life experience, meet wonderful new people, and give back to the community through service with the homeless during her time in the Scholars program.

JACQUELINE wants to become an elementary school teacher in order to give children a positive school experience and help improve their self esteem. She lives in Burlington with her 5 year old son. She's working very hard to make a better life for her family and wishes more

people would realize how many welfare recipients are doing likewise and are eager to become self sufficient. She is interested in volunteering to develop more local programs to assist latch-key children.

LORI also stresses the importance of being able to give something back to the community in exchange for any financial assistance she receives. She wishes there were many more programs similar to the Community Service Scholars Program. Her 16 year old daughter and 5 year old son live with her in Rutland. Lori plans to commute to Trinity next year (weekend college) so her daughter can remain in her present High School. Lori has received significant statewide recognition for her community service work in support of survivors of incest. She plans to continue this work during her education at Trinity, being an advocate for children and teens who are victims of incest.

AMY lives in East Fairfield with her daughters Heather (age 6) and Brittany (age 2). She is working on a degree in accounting and volunteers as the guardian for a developmentally disabled woman in her community. This and other experiences have convinced Amy that the real important thing in life isn't how much money one has or what kind of car one drives. Rather, it is what one does with one's life. She would like to volunteer helping children who are victims of child abuse.

KATHY has learned through her volunteer work with elders that "life is short and respect is little." She and her 3 year old daughter live in Burlington. She is a psychology major and has creative ideas for volunteers and professionals to help abusive parents learn more appropriate behaviors. Kathy has overcome significant obstacles to get to this point where she is on a solid track to achieving a better future for her family.

ALLISON and her 2 1/2 year old son live in Essex Junction. She is pursuing a psychology degree and would really like to go to law school some day so she can help juveniles who are in trouble. Allison has come to realize how frighteningly easy it is to become homeless in our community and she wants to volunteer helping homeless people improve their situations. She has already begun attending Trinity and has found it to be very intellectually stimulating.

The New York Times

NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 28, 1991

Business Day

Helping Single Parents Find Success in College

By SALLY JOHNSON
Special to The New York Times

BURLINGTON, Vt., Aug. 27 — Michelle Feaver's life had fallen apart last fall, when she enrolled in the Community Service Scholarship Program at Trinity College here. Two years earlier Ms. Feaver, a mother of two, had fled New Zealand and a failing marriage to settle near her family in Vermont. But without a college degree her job prospects were dismal.

Now, a year into a program designed specifically for single, low-income parents, her life has taken an abrupt turn for the better.

"I'm looking into graduate schools," said Ms. Feaver, who is now 30 years old and who expects to receive an undergraduate degree in economics next May. "I'm going for a Ph.D. in economics."

Ms. Feaver is one of 18 single parents, all eligible for welfare, who are enrolled in Trinity's two-year-old program — one of about three dozen such programs to emerge in the United States in recent years.

Study and Community Service

"Some of the programs are little more than one person on campus; others provide residential housing

> The conflicting demands of scholarship and parenthood.

services," said Bruce Spector, director of the community service program at Trinity who is a founder of the new Single Parent Scholars Consortium, which represents about 75 colleges, universities and social service agencies.

titudes that some of their 18-to-22-year-old classmates have toward welfare recipients.

"One young girl stood up and said that welfare mothers stay home and watch TV and have more kids so they can get more money," said Kathy Stevens, who at 42 is one of the older women in the group. "She said we all spend our money on drugs and booze. I set her straight."

Ms. Stevens was a bookkeeper in a doctor's office before quitting to care for the last of her four children.

Goddard College as Pioneer

Higher education has long been an unattainable goal for many low-income single parents, who have neither the time nor the money for college.

Goddard College in Plainfield, Vt., established the nation's first single-parent program in 1986. Working with the State of Vermont, Goddard brought single mothers onto campus and set them up in dormitories with their children. Of the 12 who started that year, 4 have graduated, said Hervena Martin, who works in Goddard's records office.

Congress opened the door for similar programs when it passed Title II of the Family Security Act of 1988, the JOBS Program, which directed social-welfare providers to continue benefits for recipients who enrolled in college. Before the bill was approved welfare recipients automatically lost benefits, including food stamps, when they entered college.

The notion that single parents may require extra services is relatively new on college campuses.

Participants in the Trinity program have to maintain at least a 2.5 grade point average and take 12 credit hours each semester. The college also requires them to do eight hours of community service a week.

In return, Trinity gives them a $2,000-a-semester scholarship and helps assemble a financial package of Federal and state grants to cover the rest of the $4,000 tuition for the semester.

This year's participants gathered on the Burlington campus on Aug. 15 for a three-day orientation session as veterans of the program and staff members tried to smooth the transition for the newcomers. They are learning how to manage their time, take tests, deal with difficult people. And they are learning about one another.

Some Conflicting Demands

Anne-Marie Denis, a carpenter for three years before joining the program, said that for a single parent the most difficult aspect of going to college is the conflicting demands of scholarship and parenthood.

"What do you do when you have to study for a final exam and your kid is the school play?" asked Ms. Denis, a 34-year-old mother of two. Around the room heads nodded sympathetically.

They laugh, painfully, about the attitudes that some of their 18-to-22-year-old classmates have toward welfare recipients.

"One young girl stood up and said that welfare mothers stay home and watch TV and have more kids so they can get more money," said Kathy Stevens, who at 42 is one of the older women in the group. "She said we all spend our money on drugs and booze. I set her straight."

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The notion that single parents may require extra services is relatively new on college campuses.

Single parents had been going to college for a long time without much fanfare or much help, but this is the first time that Congress actually said post-secondary education is O.K. for welfare recipients," said Julia Riley, who was a single mother when she attended the University of Utah from 1980 through 1985. She has just written a book, "Living the Possible Dream: A Single Parent's Guide to College Success," scheduled to be published by Johnson Books, of Boulder, Colo., next month.

High Quality Programs

Although the specifics of the programs vary in size and structure — some are residential, and others are not — Ms. Riley found that the high quality programs share certain characteristics.

"The best ones offer some type of orientation, classes in test-taking and studying, help with financial aid, things designed to make the person feel at home," she said. "On-campus child care seems to be real important, or if not that, at least help in finding child care."

Ms. Feaver said it was these types of services that drew her to Trinity. She liked the day care on campus and the orientation program, which let her meet people and see the school before classes began.

The size of Trinity College — 1,100 students — and the attitude of the program's staff were an added allure, Ms. Feaver says.

"People were helpful," she said. "They gave me their time, answered my questions. I didn't find that everywhere."

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Burlington Free Press August, 1990

Mothers hit books at Trinity

ADAM RIESNER, Free Press

om left, Bruce Spector, a group leader, Anna Parker, Laura Walker, Kathy Stevens, Paula Bissonnette and a Lamy participate in a problem-solving exercise involving teamwork, during orientation for a single-others' program at Trinity College.

Poor single parents build self-sufficiency

By Andrea Zentz
Free Press Staff Writer

Michelle Feaver tucked her little girls — Whitney, 3, and Chelsea, 17 months — into bed and lined up their goodies for the next four days: two Golden Books, two mini Etch-a-Sketches, two boxes of Animal Crackers and two plastic jars of bubbles.

With a limited budget, Feaver had searched for 99-cent surprises for each day she would be away.

Then with a sigh, she grabbed her suitcase and set out to make a better life for herself and her children.

Feaver, 29, of Burlington was off to an orientation program at Trinity College. For four exhausting days, from 8:30 a.m. to 9 p.m., she and 10 other single mothers — or, as educators at Trinity call them, the scholars — are taking a refresher course in math, brushing up on their study skills, attending personal-development workshops, participating in team-building activities, learning about career planning, and tackling a number of other issues to prepare them for the academic year.

For most of the mothers, the orientation marks the first time they have stepped inside a classroom in about a decade.

Trinity College is one of three higher-education institutions in Vermont offering specific programs to enable low-income single parents to achieve self- sufficiency. Bruce Spector, director of the Community Service Scholars program, said Trinity is helping them attain the education necessary to achieve a decent standard of living for themselves and their children.

"This is not charity," he said. "These students work as hard or harder than

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Single mothers work toward degrees, self-sufficiency

From page 1B

other students. And they are some of our best students. Over half the single-parents scholars in Trinity's program last year were on the dean's list."

For the $2,000-a-year scholarship they receive from Trinity and the financial aid they garner from state and federal resources, the single parents are required to spend eight hours per week in community service work.

That is one unique aspect of Trinity's program, which was lauded recently at a national conference of individuals and organizations interested in having single parents work toward self-sufficiency. Spector volunteered to spearhead a national consortium in which colleges and universities will share the steps they are taking to help single parents.

Trinity is now home to the consortium. Its goals are:

- To distribute information on research, governmental policy, funding, program design and the results of programs benefiting single parents.
- To be an advocate among academia, business, government and the public for the interests of single-parent scholarship.
- To encourage the spread of successful scholar programs.
- To set up a formal network of professionals who can assist with development of the programs.

Spector said single-parent scholar programs across the country are in their infancy. Trinity's is in its second year.

Helen Rondeau, 39, of Burlington, has been a community service scholar for one year. She is majoring in special education and psychology. She hasn't decided whether she'll work with hearing impaired, emotionally disturbed or special education children. She's also thinking about working with single parents.

An honor student, she said she feels a need to do really well to ensure the program continues.

Rondeau said the support system that the weeklong orientation creates is invaluable. The mothers have to juggle baby sitters to get away for the week, but it's well worth the effort, she said.

"People get to know each other, and it builds, and it builds," she said. "We talk about sick kids, day-care problems and just regular problems women have every day of their lives.

"There's always someone who's up when you're down. They're cheerleaders. That's what they call them. Everybody wants to see you make it. If we make it, it's going to help somebody else to make it."

Maria Sanders, 20, of Burlington said getting to know the other single-parent scholars in orientation helps when school starts. "It's a little intimidating coming in when you're an adult," she said.

The scholars said they got to know each other during team-building exercises. They had to lift their colleagues through a little hole framed by rope without touching it.

Laura Walker, 19, of Burlington was one of the first to be lifted. "That was the biggest thing for me to do, to trust people not to drop me," she said.

The scholars chatted about how exhausted they were after the exercises. Paula Bissonnette, 32, of Burlington said their schedules have been quite rigorous. "It's jampacked, non-stop," she said.

Not only does Bissonnette want to get a degree in the humanities, she also hopes to get a new sense of self-esteem.

"After the divorce and when I got on welfare, I realized I had to go to school," she said. "When you come out of divorce, it brings your butt down to the ground. You need something or someone to bring you up. College is going to be a catalyst."

Her new-found friends teased her, saying she didn't need anything to get her going; she needed something to slow her down.

Determination was a common theme. Tishka Huckins, 25, of Burlington said she is not going to let anything get in the way of her degree.

With a 4-year-old daughter and a baby on the way, she plans to major in business with a track in marketing. She said she would be pursuing a degree if there weren't a single-parent program.

"I'm pretty determined," she said. "But it would be harder without the support of the other people to keep going."

Rondeau said the state's Reach Up program has helped the mothers with the cost of books, car repairs, gasoline and more.

Reach Up is an initiative of Gov. Madeleine M. Kunin that assists single parents on welfare in attaining self-sufficiency.

Rondeau said she is excited about the effect the program has had on her son, Corey, 4.

"When one's own self-esteem is upgraded, so is their children's," she said. "They have good role models."

Corey will be attending Trinity's kindergarten this fall.

"He's really excited to be next door to his mom," she said. "I think I can speak for most of the moms here. Their children [illegible] their best cheerleaders."

Most of the scholars [illegible] welfare. Some, such as Rondeau, went on welfare to better themselves. The problem, she said, is that many single mothers are in jobs where they can't afford to advance any further, to better themselves. "You can't afford to take classes," she said. "So you're stuck."

She said something is wrong with the system if a single mother cannot obtain enough aid to better herself without having to go totally to state assistance.

Rondeau said it's difficult to convince some single mothers that there is a way to get off welfare. "Some people feel so helpless. They've been on the welfare so long," she said. "They need to believe in themselves, that they can do better."

That's when the community service comes in, Spector said. It gives the scholars a sense of worth.

"It helps build self-esteem by giving something back," he said. "It helps to get around this image that the welfare system projects, that you're only a taker, not a giver."

Denise Wright, 32, of Burlington said community service is one of the best components of the program.

"I think it will complete the picture for me," she said. "This is a chance to break down a lot of barriers, too. I would like to go beyond Denise Wright, the welfare recipient vs. Mr. Business. ... That's as important for other people in the community as it is for me."

Anna Parker, 22, of Williston agrees the community service is important. She said the program has begun to boost her spirits, and she hasn't started classes.

"I realize: Wow! There is a lot of good to me, and I do have a lot more potential. I know I can do more," she said.

She looks forward to the day her daughter, Julie, 4, can understand what her mother has accomplished. "I think she'll definitely be proud of me," Parker said.

As a school psychologist, she'll have more time to spend with her daughter. "I like to think we'll grow up together as mother and daughter, but also as buddy to buddy," she said. "It'll open up our relationship more because I will be somebody she'll be proud of."

Elaine Viens, 29, of Bristol drives 30 miles a day to classes. After a year in the program, she said, it's worthwhile, but difficult. Juggling community service, homework and children is "very, very hard," she said.

But she said she has learned more than any textbook could teach her.

"I've learned how to be happy with what I do and not to set unrealistic goals for myself, not to reach beyond what I can do with two children," she said. "Once you're in school, it flows. I don't think it gets easier.

"You learn to balance. ... It's demanding. You have to be devoted. You fail sometimes. You might not be able to get a paper done by Wednesday. You have to be able to say: OK, you failed, but look at how hard you tried."

Rondeau interrupted, asking, "But when you have down days, where do you go?"

Viens responded: "You look for each other."

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THE SUNDAY RUTLAND HERALD AND TIMES ARGUS

August 18, 1991

Low-Income, Single Parents Go Back To School

Vt. Colleges Offer Programs To Help Turn Lives Around

By SALLY JOHNSON
Sunday Staff Writer

BURLINGTON — Michelle Feaver's life had fallen apart when she enrolled in the Community Service Scholarship Program at Trinity College last fall. In 1988, the freckled, blonde mother of two fled New Zealand and a failing marriage to settle in Vermont near her family. Without a college degree, her employment prospects were dismal.

Now, a year into the program, which is designed specifically for low-income single parents, her world view has turned around.

"I'm looking into graduate schools," said Feaver, who will receive her undergraduate degree in economics next May, if all goes as planned. "I'm going for a Ph.D. in economics." Included on her list of possibilities are Stanford and Cornell.

Feaver is one of 18 single parents, all of whom are low-income and eligible for welfare, currently enrolled in Trinity's two-year-old program. It is one of about three dozen similar programs which have sprung up around the country in the last few years. Others in Vermont are at Champlain College in Burlington and at Goddard College in Plainfield.

"Some of the programs are little more than one person on campus; others provide residential housing services," said Bruce Spector, director of the community-service program at Trinity and a founder of the new Single Parent Scholars Consortium, which met for a week in June in Kentucky.

As part of the admission agreement at Trinity, all "scholars," as the students are called, must promise to maintain a 2.5 grade point average and take 12 credit hours each semester. Unique to Trinity is a requirement that all community service scholars perform eight hours of community service each week.

In return, the college gives them a $2,000 scholarship and helps assemble a financial package of federal and state grants to cover the rest of the $4,000 tuition for the semester.

"One young girl stood up and said that welfare mothers stay home and watch TV and have more kids so they can get more money. She said we all spend our money on drugs and booze. I set her straight."

— Kathy Stevens,
Trinity College student

The group is gathered on the Burlington campus this weekend for an intensive, three-day orientation, in which veteran scholars and staff are trying to ease the fears and smooth the transition for newcomers. During these three days, they are learning how to

See Page 2: College

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College

(Continued from Page One)

manage their time, how to take tests, even how to deal with difficult people. Most importantly, they are learning about each other.

Sitting in a small circle, they share tips for studying — "Never study in the lounge," said one veteran, "always start your research papers early," advised another -- as well as complaints about social workers and the bureaucratic glitches that can upend their lives.

Anne-Marie Denis, a carpenter for three years before joining the program, offers the thought that the most difficult aspect of going to college for a single parent is the conflicting pull of scholarship and parenting.

"What do you do when you have to study for a final exam and your kid is the school play?" she wants to know. Around the room, heads nod in sympathy.

They laugh, painfully, about the attitudes toward welfare they frequently encounter from traditional students, the 18- to 22-year-olds with whom they attend classes.

"One young girl stood up and said that welfare mothers stay home and watch TV and have more kids so they can get more money," said Kathy Stevens, one of the older women in the group. The average age in the program is 32. "She said we all spend our money on drugs and booze." Stevens paused. "I set her straight."

Traditionally, higher education has been an out-of-reach goal for many low-income single parents for reasons of time and money. Goddard College set up the nation's first single-parent program in 1966. Working with the state, Goddard brought single mothers onto campus and set them up in dormitories with their children. Of the 12 who started that year, four have since graduated, according to Hervena Martin in Goddard's office of records.

Congress opened the door for single-parent college programs when it passed the JOBS Program, which was Title II of the Family Security Act of 1988. Before then, welfare recipients automatically lost their benefits, including food stamps, when they entered college. The new law directed social-welfare providers to continue benefits for recipients enrolled in college.

Faced with a significant decline in the traditional applicant pool, some colleges saw opportunity in this new, older, highly-motivated student population waiting in the wings.

"Some colleges see this as a business opportunity and others see it as a chance to fulfill their social mission," said Spector. "With the growing feminization of poverty, this country has to find a way to offer these women an education so that they can take their place in the workforce."

The notion that single parents may require extra services is relatively new on college campuses.

"Single parents had been going to college for a long time without much fanfare or much help," said Julia Riley, who was a single mother when she attended the University of Utah from 1980 to 1986. Riley has just written a book called "Living the Possible Dream: A Single Parent's Guide to College Success," scheduled to be published late next month.

In her guide, she describes "what I considered to be the 15 strongest single-parent programs around the country. They are mainly at small, private schools, although some large schools have good ones."

Although the specifics vary with respect to size and structure — for instance, some are residential and some are not — Riley found common attributes among the best programs.

"The best ones offer some type of orientation, classes in test-taking and studying, help with financial aid, things designed to make the person feel at home," she said. "On-campus child care seems to be real important, or if not that, at least help in finding child care.

"One idea I liked a lot is mentoring programs in which the older students help the new students through their first weeks. Weekly or monthly meetings of support groups, maybe some planned family activities are good. Some will help coordinate with social-services personnel."

It was just that type of service that drew Michelle Feaver to the Trinity program when she was shopping around. She liked the tangibles such as Trinity's on-campus day care and the orientation program, which gave her a chance to meet people and see the school before the first day of classes. She was attracted by the community-service component, which is designed both to benefit the community and to give scholars a close-up look at the workplace. Feaver works in a credit union for low-income people.

Then, too, there were the intangibles: the size of the school — 1,100 students including everybody — and the attitude of the staff.

"People were helpful," she said. "They gave me their time, answered my questions. I didn't find that everywhere."

That respect, she said, is no more than her due.

"You might call us late-bloomers," she continued. A lot of us could have made it earlier if we'd had some different circumstances in our lives. I meet lots of people on welfare who are very smart, they just need comprehensive services. I never met a more deserving group."

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AUG 15 1989

NEW ENGLAND NEWSCLIP AGENCY, INC.

Trinity tackles poverty

Program aims to break cycle

By Helle Orsted Nielsen
Free Press Staff Writer

Debra Alexander stayed for a while at Burlington's Emergency Shelter when she moved from Springfield earlier this month.

This week the single mother of three young children is in a new apartment and is beginning her freshman year at Trinity College in Burlington, studying sociology and criminal justice. Eventually, the 27-year-old welfare recipient wants to become an attorney specializing in child protection issues.

She is one of 12 women participating in a new program at Trinity designed to break the cycle of poverty through education. The program also will offer the participants an opportunity to compare notes on how to meet the demands of school and parenting.

"I'm meeting (11) people who have similar problems and having that support means a lot," said Alexander.

Gov. Madeleine Kunin Monday told the students, "You will create a brighter future for your children, and really help all of society of the state of Vermont."

Ron Chesbrough, the program director, said about 88 percent of the welfare recipients in Chittenden County are single parents, and the "overwhelming majority" of those are women, who are unable to provide for their families because they do not have the skills required for well-paying jobs.

To qualify for the scholarship program, students must be single parents on welfare, meet Trinity's admission standards and have shown a commitment to community service.

The program is funded jointly by private sponsors, Trinity College and both the state and federal governments.

In addition to grants from other sources, each community service scholar will receive a $2,000 grant every year from Trinity College or a private donor to help pay for the $7,800-a-year tuition.

Two private individuals have agreed to sponsor scholarships, but Trinity hopes to have private sponsors for all students by the end of the year, said college President Janice Ryan.

The state Reach Up program helps pay for child care, transportion, educational expenses such as books and clothing. The state Social Welfare Department also contributes significantly by not cutting the students' welfare aid despite the financial aid they will receive, Chesbrough said.

In the first year of the program, 12 students, all women, have been admitted. At full enrollment, the program will have 30 single parents.

The Trinity single parent program is one of at least three such programs in Vermont. Goddard College in Plainfield, Johnson State College in Johnson, and Champlain College in Burlington also have programs designed specifically for single parents.

But Trinity's is the only program that requires its scholars to work for community organizations. The students' community service work will be tailored to their degree, and they will receive academic credit for some of it.

"Those community service experiences will be designed to enhance your educational and professional growth," Ryan told the students at the inauguration. "The community, likewise, will benefit from the maturity of your experiences and your skills."

Students said they liked the demands the program placed on them.

"One of the nicest parts of the program is to be able to get credit and get work experience," said Michelle Labelle, 25. "You realize your capabilities and the contributions you can make."

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VERMONT
Times
AN INDEPENDENT LOCALLY OWNED COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

EDUCATION: Making college an option for welfare parents.

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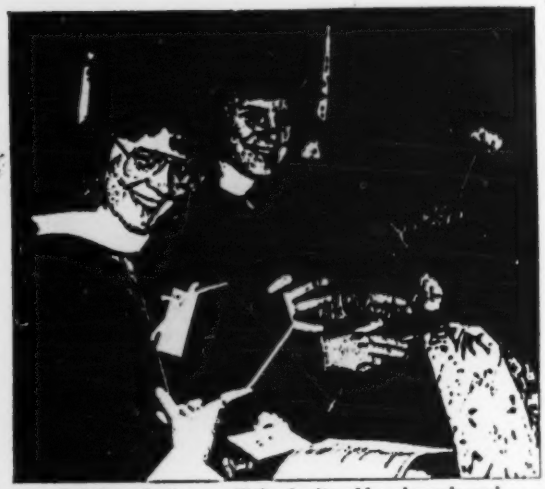

Lisa Colebaugh shows off the fruits of hard work and school support.

Making College Work For Everyone

Trinity's College Makes School an Option for Welfare Parents with Community Service Scholars

By Matt Sutkoski
Correspondent

A number of personnel directors no doubt are impressed with Lisa Colebaugh's credentials. The single mother of a 6-year-old boy graduated cum laude from Trinity College this spring with a 3.69 grade point average. She's been on the President's List for two years, meaning she's had straight A's. She's also had experience with management services, which complements her degree in business administration with a minor in accounting.

Not bad for someone who until recently faced an endless dependency on welfare or, at best, low-paying, dead-end jobs.

Colebaugh is the first graduate of Trinity's Community Service Scholars Program. It is open to single parent heads of households who are eligible for welfare and ready for admission to Trinity. The college helps the students arrange grants and student loans and kicks in up to $2,000 of the difference between the grant money and the total tuition. Because of the way the aid is structured, tuition help is not subtracted from welfare benefits, thus removing one of the major obstacles for welfare recipients seeking a college education.

The 18 students participating in the program this year may be victims of the ever-widening gap between federal student assistance and the spiraling cost of college tuition. Much of Trinity's share of the program's cost comes from community donations, although this year the students will have to dig into their pockets for part of the tuition.

In addition to a full course load, the students are required to perform at least eight hours of community service per week, which "complements the academic program," says Bruce

Continued on Page 11

...Trinity

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Spector, Trinity's community service director. For example, one education major volunteered as a soccer coach and worked with mentally retarded teens.

The community service helps students in a number of ways. "Not only are you doing it for your resume, you're also figuring out what you want to do and what you don't want to do," Colebaugh says. For example, she quickly learned that working directly with children is not for her, but an administrative position in an organization helping children might be perfect.

The program is also blowing a big hole in the stereotype of welfare mothers – that they are shiftless, lazy and ignorant. "One thing they have in common is that they're tremendously motivated," Spector says. Eleven of the 17 students in the program made Dean's List, well above the average of Trinity's general student population, he noted.

Colebaugh never advertised that she was in the special program, but "I always got in situations where welfare would come up in class. The stereotypes would come right out. I would just try to enlighten them."

The program is not easy. The students take a full course load, are busy with community service, and still have to raise their kids.

"You're sitting there with all that homework and you're getting flak for that," Colebaugh says, recalling the effect her extra work had on her son, who felt she was always busy with school work.

Colebaugh would get up early in the morning, come home around 6 p.m.; study until 1 or 2 in the morning and do it all again the next day.

Besides that, the combination of college and welfare proved difficult for her. "You have to go through all this red tape. You're trying to better yourself and they're making it difficult," she said of federal welfare benefits.

Programs like Trinity's are beginning to catch on. A national conference on single parents and self-sufficiency is scheduled in June. Some state governments are making it easier for single parents on welfare to go to college, Spector says.

Meanwhile, Colebaugh reports she's already had "a couple of interviews" for jobs and other nibbles. She's also been offered a temporary position at the Medical Center Hospital. "I don't have to work at Burger King or Ames," she says. "I can now have options. I can take care of my child." ■

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Community Service Scholars Program

Description

Established in Fall 1989, this program gives single parents on welfare an opportunity to earn a four-year college degree while volunteering six hours per week in community service projects. The program aims to end students' need for public assistance and raise their expectations for themselves and their families. This was the first program in the country to pair college work with community service and in so doing provide the community with a pool of experienced volunteers who become highly valued contributors to the community.

Participants

Scholars are chosen competitively each summer based on their academic, leadership and community service potential. Having started with 12 students, the program now serves over 20 low-income single parents. More than half of the students achieve Dean's List status (G.P.A. of 3.5 or better). The retention rate has been over 94 percent.

Support

Scholars receive financial support to cover most educational expenses. Academic and emotional support is provided by the Program Director, the Coordinator of Academic Advising and a campus-based social welfare case manager. To establish supportive relationships, the scholars participate in an intensive summer orientation program as well as in regular support group meetings throughout the year.

Funding

A two-year start-up grant funded the program initially. Since then, however, the Trinity College community with the help of individuals, foundations, businesses and public grants has been entirely responsible for covering the educational costs of Scholars. The College is currently seeking an endowment for this program.

Why

The Community Service Scholars Program keeps faith with Trinity's history and its values by supporting women, academic excellence and social responsibility. Said Bartlett Giamatti, the former President of Yale, "There is no growth of the moral and mental powers of the self if the self alone is the ultimate goal of learning. Independence of an enduring kind, noble and practical, arrives only when one realizes what it means, in all its glory and responsibility, that one is not alone."

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